



## Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

# Advanced Study 004 : Character Study 3 : Abraham

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Read Genesis 12:1-4 and Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19.

**Introduction.** Considered to be the father of the nation of Israel and father of faith in God, Abraham epitomises the life of faith and the sovereign choice of God of those whom He calls and uses to serve Him.

### 1. Consider:

(i) The cost of his obedience to God. The decision to leave Mesopotamia was not solely that of Abraham's father, but as a direct command of God (read Acts 7:2-4). Abraham left behind the security of one of the most advanced civilisations of the ancient world. Where did Abraham's security now lie?

(ii) The significant in the change of name from 'Abram' to 'Abraham' (Gen 17:5).

(iii) His apparent failure to rely fully on God, despite his underlying faith for which he was commended:

Twice he failed to trust God to preserve him. He lied that his wife Sarah was his sister, lest he be killed to make Sarah available to marry (Gen 12:10-13; 20:1-5).

Though believing God would give him an offspring as promised, he sought his own solution as to how this could be carried out. He fathered a child through his wife's servant Hagar (Gen 16:3). Does Romans 4:20 contradict this, or was Paul referring here to an underlying faith that was undiminished by Abraham's action?

What were the results of these precipitous actions (see Gen 12:17-20; 20:3-9; 16:4-8,15,9-21 and what you know of the subsequent history of Ishmael)?

(iv) In James 2:23, Abraham is called the 'Friend of God'. What endeared him to God, despite his faults?

(v) Abraham's readiness to obey God's command to slay his son Isaac (Gen 22:1-3). What might have been going through Abraham's mind in addition to the traumatic emotion he must have felt? He would have been aware of the child sacrifices made by his neighbours to their pagan deities. So, do you think Abraham might have felt under obligation to match their misplaced devotion by showing similar devotion to the LORD? Can you think of any actions carried out by unbelievers in your society with a zeal that challenges your devotion to Jesus?

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## **2. Compare.**

Abraham, in James 2:23, with David, in Acts 13:22 and *Advanced Study 002*.

## **3. Explore**

Find and read about the remarkable buildings and infrastructure of the region, as revealed by archaeologists.

**Self-examination:** To what extent are your choices governed by faith in God's way being the best whatever the cost or the uncertainty of the outcome?

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